



A COLLECTION OF POEMS

# BODILESS SHADOWS

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BY  
MIR IMTIYAZ AAFREEN

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*A Collection of Poems*

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to Eshal & Omaíra,  
both the coolness of my eyes

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## *About the Author*

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen is a research scholar, writer, columnist, author, teacher and social activist from the valley of Kashmir. He has a good study of the literatures of English, Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Kashmiri languages. His main interests are: religion, spirituality and literature. His columns, essays and poems have been published in many well-known newspapers and magazines. His four books have already been published. The first one is "Kitab-ul-Zakat" which is a treatise on the Islamic system of Charity. The second one is his maiden collection of poems in Urdu and Kashmiri "Naqsh-e-Wafa" which has been well received by poetry lovers. The third one is a Haj Guide in Urdu "Haj o Umrah Qadam ba Qadam". His fourth book "Kashmir Mein Islami Inqilab aur Hazrat Shahi Hamadan " is a collection of research articles on the life and works of Hazrat Shahi Hamadan (RA) the benefactor of Kashmir. Many of his books are yet to be published.

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen was born in a socially and educationally backward village at Kanir which is located in Budgam district in conflict-ridden state of Jammu and Kashmir. He was raised in an agrarian middle-class family and was just 6 when the armed rebellion started in 1989 which was the beginning of an era of bloodshed and other disturbances. When in 6th class, the school in which he was studying was closed by the Government on security issues. Due to crackdowns and protest strikes his schooling was badly affected but he kept on resorting to self-study. Due to difficult financial conditions, he was not able to get the best facilities as far as his education is concerned. However, resorting to austerity, he somehow managed to clear his secondary and senior secondary classes with first division in Science stream. Right from his childhood, he was deeply interested in Islamic literature and poetry. Taking an inspiration from Allama Iqbal, he began to compose poems in Urdu and English from a very tender age. In these days he would help himself by getting books from the state-run public libraries. After

completing his graduation from A S College Srinagar, he was selected for Masters in English programme in Kashmir University. On the day he had to submit his form in the university, a house in his neighborhood was raised to the ground as some militants were hiding there and in the encounter a 16 year old innocent boy of the village also got killed. Due to unconducive environment and distance from the university, he had to stay away from his home for more than two years to get his Master's degree completed.

After MA, he was also selected for M Phil but in the meanwhile got a job in Revenue Department. He wanted to go for higher studies but due to unsound financial conditions, he had to leave the university. Later on he got another job as Relationship Executive in J&K Bank. He was finally selected as lecturer in English in School Education Department, Govt of J&K and since 2010 has been offering his services for teaching English language and literature. In the meanwhile, he also completed his Master's in Islamic Studies and also qualified State Eligibility Test (JKSET) for eligibility for Assistant Professor in Higher Education Department. Currently he is working as Senior Lecturer in English in School Education Department.

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen is also the founder and Patron of Kashmir based NGO Raza e Mustafa Foundation which has been doing an exemplary work in the promotion and propagation of Islamic values and in the various domains of public welfare.

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen also got an opportunity to work with the Consulate General of India in Jeddah (KSA) regarding the guidance and counseling of Haj pilgrims. Since then, he has been conducting various Hajj training programs for the benefit of Hajj pilgrims. Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen is also a brilliant orator and he has delivered many lectures on religion, spirituality and literature.

'Bodiless Shadows' is his maiden collection of poems in English.



## *Foreword*

Poetry is the rhythmic expression of thoughts and feelings through the medium of language. Great poets from diverse cultures having an outstanding command on language gave a beautiful expression to human thoughts and feelings through their eternal lines. A poet is the mirror of his age, he not only represents it but also strives to reform it. Though a poet usually responds to his personal perceptions but at the same time he cannot remain unaffected by his sociocultural environment. There is something mysterious about the poets, they find themselves in a strange ecstasy when they write. Sometimes they cannot believe what is in front of them is actually their own composition and they associate their works to divine interventions. Ghalib one of the greatest poets of all times remarks,

"These thoughts that I commit to words come straight from the unknown.

The susurrus that my quill doth make is in fact the angel who spake."  
(Trans. by T P Issar)

From ancient Greece to modern times, the poets have always been associated with having divine inspirations and were held in high esteem. Have a look at poetic tradition of any culture, you will be amazed with what the poets have been able to produce. The world classics like Iliad and Odyssey, Oedipus Rex, Divine Comedy, Shakespearean tragedies, Paradise Lost, The Wasteland, Mathnavi of Rumi etc. are the finest pieces of literature that still baffle the human mind with their class. The great poets like Homer, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Eliot, Rumi, Hafiz, Saadi, Ghalib, Iqbal, and Faiz are all important links in this golden chain of great poets. They have set the values that seem quite impossible to surpass and it is a Herculean task to get closer to their artistic magnificence. They composed poetry of the highest quality and addressed the problems of mankind.

Centuries have passed but human souls are still moved and inspired by their works. Nizami rightly points out, " Under the poet's tongue lies the key of the treasury. "

The poet's tongue is fascinating and full of wisdom and at the same time it is as sharp as a sword in calling a spade a spade. A poet's job is not only to mirror his age but also to clear its follies. The poets in almost all leading cultures enjoyed a prestige that even nobles envied. The poets in all ages maintained high standards of versification and thus earned a great respect and reverence.

However lately it has been observed that the standard of great poetry is sharply heading towards decline and the new generation due to some reasons has not been able to attain the

station of the poets of the past. The society no longer respects and patronizes the poets as it used to be in the past. Moreover, materialism and objectification of man have marred and killed the emotional and aesthetic aspect of man to such an extent that he has lost the power of appreciation of truth and beauty which is so essential for the composition and appreciation of poetry. Thus, it is not surprising that today we see a huge number of literary critics but rarely find a poetic genius who is able to establish his place in the galaxy of the great poets. One gets a feeling that what was to be said has already been put forth so beautifully by the great poets and there is nothing left today except imitations and repetitions. Literary critics earn their bread and butter by analyzing the works of great writers but they themselves lack the basic creative talents as a result academic activities have got reduced to verbalism. Now it is considered a great literary service when some scholar is able to make a castle of words around some fine work of art, originality and creativity have long since been abandoned. The classical writers firstly formulated the rules of versification and then proved their mettle by putting them in practice. Most of the poets of today have not been able to continue the tradition, the recent liberal trends in poetry can be taken as a perfect example. Post-modernism broke all the boundaries and liberated the art from formal structures and a strict adherence to the rules was not considered necessary.

Thus all kinds of people like me finding the field open jumped the gun and put all kinds of stuff together.

Personally speaking, I never see myself as a poet but a fan of all good poets. I have expressed these words in the capacity of being an avid

reader of literature. The truth is that I have never taken my poetry seriously because I've always been aware of my limitations in this field. However, something from within kept on compelling me to take the pen in hands and to give expression to the things that I feel. Thus, these poems have been lying with me as a collection of personal memories. However, on the insistence of some close friends who found some of these poems here and there, I made my mind to bring them to the forefront.

These are basically loose attempts of recording personal thoughts and feelings. Most of these poems were actually composed when I was a student in Amar Singh College Srinagar ([2002-2004](#)) and later on after getting admission in University of Kashmir ([2005-2007](#)) some other poems were penned down. Being unfamiliar with the rules of versification, I let my words to be as free as possible. Those days Romanticism and Spirituality were the chief concerns and these two trends emerged as a major influence. The readers will definitely find some flaws here and there, I hope they will guide me to rectify them in the second edition.

Like Keats I'm also of the opinion that poetry should not be used to unravel philosophical intricacies, but it should be used for the incarnation of beauty. It should be aimed at providing both aesthetic pleasures as well as enlightenment. Edgar Allan Poe rightly says that poetry is the name of the creation of beauty. It is beauty that charges up hearts and adds sweetness to our stressful lives. According to Shelley, a poet is like a nightingale that sings in the dark corner of loneliness to delight itself with sweet melodies. Loneliness is a great asset of the poet as it enables him to ponder over things and as a result he comes up with the words of wisdom. Mostly a poet describes his subjective experiences in his poetry and responding to this some people raise questions regarding its relevance to general human condition. We must always remember that all of us in one way or the other are players on the stage of life, we as human individuals have common emotional concerns and predicaments. Thus, nothing is personal or subjective in poetry, the voice of the poet is our own voice returned to us indirectly. I hope the readers will definitely find a familiar and pleasing voice in these poems

and if that is not the case hope they will,  
"Listen with ears of tolerance!  
See through the eyes of compassion! and speak with the language of  
love"

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## *Thirsty Days; Hungry Nights*

Parched lips, cracks in the land  
Boiling mind, empty hand  
All the eyes watching into the sky  
Sweating heads, waters far away  
Lifeless eyes, senses kept at bay  
Nobody near to listen and say  
Thirsty days; hungry nights  
Fate of loveless life – devouring plights  
Hopelessness reminds of rosy days  
“Peep at your past” my heart now says

Hot days, darkness of heart,  
Lonely nights and tears I got  
Indifference to joy, night in lights  
Viper of solitude every moment bites  
My night waiting for that light

With whose grace stars are bright  
Toiling up the hill in the blazing sun ,  
Its life, its race is run.  
What I have nothing now seems  
Only saving grace, now my dreams.  
Life is all about unending pain  
Life is draught , death rain.  
Still life, great struggle, great adventure,  
A refreshing breeze, a great venture.  
Having pain, showing pleasure  
In thorns a rose to nurture.

## *Express Yourself*

Shall I render in words?

What I feel for you.

But nay, how can I?

Words, sounds seldom mean

What I mean by them.

Disabled through suggestive gestures

Flowers by ecstatic perfume,

Skylark by singing poignant melodies,

Express what they mean and stand for.

A nymph shuts her eyes

To remind and recapture the beautiful past,

A Sufi through mystery discourses,

A traveler in dignified states

Dresses his flight to unknown lands

Sophisticated and rich by pomp and show

Express what they are.

Sportsmen celebrate by punching the air  
In ecstasy watching into heaven's eyes.  
The poets through eternal lines  
Express what is deep in hearts.  
Some by kicking ground, hiding faces  
Some by shedding talking tears.  
The troubled heart cant communicate  
What treasure lies under the poetic tongue.  
Passions, emotions and recollections  
Have no words no expressions.  
Words, sounds fail to mean  
What I mean by them  
A few sacred words, misread, misunderstood  
Everyone knows but who knows?  
In the rubble of faint longings  
In the world of show offs  
They say, 'Express Yourself'.



## *A Ray of Beauty*

Is this thy face or a bright sunshine  
A lightening in the mirror of clouds  
This thy stature or a sacred pine tree  
A red rose which adorns the paradise  
These locks of hair, dark long fetters  
Fragrant with jasmine and ambergris  
These eyes, the doors of heaven  
A pair of blue diamonds  
These eyebrows, the arches of heaven  
Two brilliant crescents of Eid.  
This mouth, a box of diamonds  
Source of a heavenly drink  
Its every word a composition  
Of an unheard melody heard  
A flow which brings a silence in ecstasy  
A stasis whose every gesture talks  
This thy street, my creed of love

A path in the gardens of Eden  
Thy beauty says let the show be perpetual  
My love says, let heart's ecstasy be eternal  
Thy pursuit, the secret of life,  
Thy praise, lover's profession  
Thou art a divine spirit, from head to toe  
Not made from clay and water  
Chaste than the morning dew,  
Fresh than the violent breeze  
A melody, a pearl, a violent perfume,  
Frenzied claret, a lightening  
A dream, a shadow, a magic  
A ray of divine beauty you are.

## *The Lost Alchemy*

O Cup-bearer to the nectar of love!  
 O blessed dove from antique lands!  
 Every moment messages pass  
 Through your silent tongue  
 Whispered to the seekers of the divine path  
 Intimated hearts sanctified, satisfied  
 The tokens of love in your beak  
 Leading to the path of eternity.  
 Thy flight over Makhdum's silhouette  
 Discourses on *maqam*, *haal* and *fana*  
 Comrade to the souls of *Reshwari*  
 Watching from the height  
 That always was and ever will be.  
 You see the heaps of clay and water  
 Running after books and bucks  
 To soothe nerves with power-balm.  
 Love, peace, liberty

In your stay, in your flight.  
The morning breeze echoes  
With the hymns of *avraadh*  
Alas! the sun ceases to rise  
The light fails to enlighten  
The resurrecting alchemy is lost.  
Can the million-dollar book of antiquity,  
Locked and buried  
Turn the tables again.

## *The Colourful Classroom*

From the last desk,  
Far from the boring hearings,  
Songs praising artful artists  
Who wrote with tears, sweat and blood  
Revealing the soars in hearts  
Giving twisted expressions.  
Meadows of humanities and sciences  
Explored in an hour of painful pleasure  
Wiping sweat from fateless foreheads,  
Vampire pens in trembling hands  
Flying over priceless papers  
Gestures telling a hundred tales  
Taboo words on passing chits  
Snowy white tainted hands.  
Some lost in waking slumber  
Gardens, streets, waiting homes, mobile-friends.

Cunning minds alert enough  
To join Darwin's rat-race.  
Time, a ticking time-bomb  
Killing untold desires,  
Breaking the image of fairy of dreams.  
A short step on the stair of life  
Hoping to touch the heart of the sky.

## *On Monalisa*

*Truth, life and love are ambiguous  
So are the human faces  
Gestures, glances, ogles and smiles  
So hard a matter for the mind to absorb  
Thou art a face half-known, half-understood  
Every veil on thy face gives clue  
Of a new and more baffling one  
Thou art an artist's dream,  
A sensation in the treasure of mind  
To know thy every facet is  
To know the unknowability of human nature  
That smile can mean  
From anything to nothing  
I, Pygmalion, the critic of Monalisa  
Interpreting to misinterpret  
Baffled, outwitted in vocation  
Only thou and thy creator knows*

*What it means for my breathings  
That mesmerizing smile,  
To listen the voice which once was heard  
From thy smiling, silent lips  
O the paragon of beauty  
Now no more silence  
Speak and decide my fate  
Say, what it was and what I thought.*



## *Friendship; A Dream*

*A copy of self like a mirror  
Somebody who shares thy breath  
Your friend savior in ordeal  
Somebody who equals thy partial being  
Probing mind unfolded by insight  
Looks for that high shining star  
Whose light shows the resplendent ways.  
Hardest, toughest task of living,  
Which is to chase a bodiless shadow  
Becomes a bed of cheerful roses  
When that line is carved on thy palm  
Gloomy life takes a u-turn  
What that heart makes a start  
The thoughts and feelings of true friends  
Not indigent of the bonded tongue.  
In a dark rainy night those souls meet  
On the Utopia of their own dreams*

*The journeys explored in company*

*In other's eyes is seen*

*An innocent and beautiful world*

*In their world of certainties*

*One and one makes one.*

*The proud 'I' vanishes*

*The world of 'We' recreated*

*The miracles of nature enjoyed*

*In the fire of love*

*Melt silently like snow, say nothing*

*Friends share sighs,*

*Speak the language of eyes*

*Yet my heart, hold thy breath*

*Better not to dream*

*Than to see them shattering.*

## *Mystic Meditations*

The closed travelling eye  
Wanders in the unknown vales  
Dark, dense, fearful forests  
Hot, humid, sandy deserts  
Far from the concrete jungle  
Sleeping in a 'modern' house.  
Swayed by the unseen damsel  
With a charm to die for  
Breaking the castle of sanctity in one gaze  
A festered lily springs from heart  
Paralyzing the super-human travelers  
After a thousand Trojan wars  
One saw the dancing La Belle Dame  
Mustered courage to touch  
She melted to nothing  
Leaving a deep sour in heart  
Searching for solace.

## *The Struggle with Silence*

In this global village  
When a human heart beats  
For the beauty seen in the abyss of matter  
In frenzy, the ecstatic desires like a howling storm  
Hits the shores of destiny hundred times a day  
The sighs and cries resound  
In dark and lonely starry nights  
A wish rises like a tempest  
Silenced by the noisy crowds  
Rising above the ridges of time  
Chasing the sensuous kites of hopes  
The muted shrill voices of love  
Echo in the prison of conscience.  
In the dungeons of the self-made conceits  
An unheard voice breaking the ice of reason murmurs  
'Be not in the snares of desires  
Kindle the lamp of gnosis in the darkest corners

Keep your eyes on the sun

You will not see the shadows of the earthly forms.'

## *The Line of Beauty*

*Let me see thousand times a day  
The polished palm to discern  
The line of beauty which heralds  
A new dawn in the darkest nights  
And breaks the burnished throne of disdain  
A ray of hope sustaining  
Inside the inferno of daring desires  
To break through the seamy nights  
A phoenix rising from the ashes  
Enlightening the dark ideas  
A Shaky line on the canvas of heart  
Coloured by the roses of Eden  
Tied by the threads of dreams  
Heading towards the distant lands  
Rising above , flying over my arena  
I remain a slave of the devouring time  
Your flight in the fields of freedom*

*The meet of converging souls  
Ends before a sensible start.  
After a hundred years of solitude  
Can that line return to the drying hands  
And unite the souls separated  
Somewhere else not here.*

## *The Bloody Horizon*

*The old, ploughing farmer  
Once used to see,  
After the exhausted day in the blazing sun  
The golden, bloody carpet stretched  
Across the poles of the sky.  
Holding a cup of tea in dusty hands  
Taking a deep breath, he would say:  
'Somebody somewhere has been killed!'  
Myriad of voices made silent  
To see a dream come true,  
In our paradise lost  
Every day- a day of bloodshed  
Every night-a nightmare  
Observing sunset at disturbing barricades  
I hear the bloody horizon saying,*



*'Everybody everywhere has been killed  
Accuse not me but  
What flows through veins.'*

## *A Layman Looks at Poetry*

*What is this? The magical alchemy of words,  
The flights to vague, unknown , Silly worlds  
Where fiction guides the made-up facts  
A wordsmith forges new arms  
To take from real to unreal  
Reason blunted by fearful images  
Haunting fearless monster!  
The beautiful lies sung to amuse  
The frenzied, enchanted, swayed souls  
Locked in the dungeons of fancy  
In this sensible world  
A game of rational fools  
Climbing stark, risky ridges  
Staking life for a moment of solace  
Running after self-created goals  
Pushed backwards in Darwin's rat race  
Yet, a divine vocation  
A smithy of souls where*

*The tears and blood mingle  
To feed the ink-marks on paper  
The poetic agony compels  
The wretched, haunted souls  
The emotions and feelings boil,  
The restless passions finding forms  
Living lives in alien corners  
Under maddening threats  
Imagining a world  
Which never was and never will be.*

## *If I Were a Painter*

*Closing the seeing eye  
To focus hard, to imagine  
'What you are?'  
For what is seen is never said  
In a sensible symmetry  
The ink-marks enriched by foot-marks  
Peering through the words  
That can't bear the burden  
Put away by wild visions  
Better if I were a painter  
Your face beaconing like a shining star  
Guiding the brush over canvas  
Choosing the colours of love  
Pleasing the probing eye  
A day of hundred year pleasures  
But neither you nor the brush in hands  
A trembling pen in groping hands  
Setting out to picturize  
The beauty touching the heart of the sky*

*Creating the ocean of feelings*

*Laboring forth a dawn of eternal melodies.*

## *‘Being Alive, What does it mean’?*

*Turning the pages of the book of science,  
 Roaming in an everlasting maze,  
 Wandering like a beggar door to door  
 With a query, ‘Being Alive, What does it mean?  
 Filling the belly with gold and silver?  
 Wandering with a magnet for metallic stuff?  
 Collecting uncounted dews for a moment’s drink?  
 Running the rat-race of time for survival?  
 In the modern mansions  
 Let me tell you, ‘Being Alive, What does it mean?  
 To walk solitary in maddening crowds  
 An odyssey for a distant land  
 Where nothingness grows on the trees of hopes  
 A struggle against the flow of a river  
 Whose merciless waves choke the dying desires  
 Leading to the abyss of arrogance  
 And washing out footprints on the sand  
 To die and live like a drop in the ocean of life.*

## *Memories*

*Slowly and silently*

*The leaves of memory fall*

*From the vernal woods*

*Doves of live in flights*

*Gather straw and twigs*

*To make an abode of peace*

*Washing hands with sweat and blood*

*Writing fate on the glass walls of time*

*Following the voices*

*Uniting broken threads of glee*

*Playing poignant melodies*

*On the lyre of heart*

*Showering tears to put out*

*The raging fire of untold desires.*

*On the pillow of mystic memories*

*In a dark and rainy night*

*A poet closing eyes*

*Striving and dying for the silhouette of love*  
*Swimming in the stream of hopes*  
*Reciting a name on the rosary of breathings*  
*Matching with the whisperings of the lovers*  
*Thinking that somebody somewhere*  
*Whose song still strikes the strings of heart*  
*Remembers him in leisure*  
*And looks to pacify a separated soul*  
*Waiting for the magical words of love.*



## *The Caravan of Dreams*

*In the footsteps of Suffering and ailing Moses  
Subdued souls of Darkling land set forth  
Towards the promised land of serenity.  
Exhausted limbs and hallucinated eyes  
Desperately moving towards the Nile of redemption.  
Asking the inauspicious question  
If the life is worth living at all?  
How much can be put on stake  
To secure a corner of love and peace?  
With the spears of hunting monsters  
The dust and water gets soaked in blood  
The Moses watching the fading faces  
Hesitates to set foot in the howling river.  
The caravan of dreams behind the powerless shadows  
jumps in the murky waters  
And finds peace in the heart of the ocean.*

## *The Voyage of No Return*

*In the labyrinthine alleys of existence*

*Shall I wander*

*For annihilation or subsistence?*

*In the bazaar of love*

*When the reason is put to death*

*Shall I look for loss or gain?*

*In the dark abysses of the world*

*Shall I look for a moment of joy*

*Or the pain of a lifetime?*

*In the convent of temptations*

*Shall I retrieve good or evil?*

*The engine of time has pushed my soul*

*Into the darkness of the underworld*

*Towards the dead-end of existence*

*With a hopeless fortitude for half-hearted adventure*

*Beyond annihilation and subsistence  
Regardless of loss and gain  
Free from the concerns of joy and sorrow  
Beyond the ideas of good and evil  
Now have I set out  
On the road of come what may  
For the daring voyage of no return.*

## *A Ticking Time Bomb*

*On a gloomy overcast day  
With a frail and plaintive body  
On the back of a rebellious horse  
Climbing the slippery and unpaved road  
After hours of undaunted struggle  
Here I am in the middle of a green valley  
Mesmerizing hues and infinite shades  
Silvery pearls on wavering leaves  
Glittering and shifting  
Across the shifting lights of the green paradise.  
Suddenly amid serene and tranquil atmosphere  
A heart-wrenching bang is heard  
Killing a youth of the paradise  
The flesh and blood scattered over the resplendent twigs  
The un-exploded shells, the sinister traps  
Devouring the innocent souls  
Though people come and go but seldom feel  
A smell of hell in the green paradise.*

## *I Hesitated, Waited and Weighed*

*I hesitated, waited and weighed*

*On the ocean of love*

*The home-sick pearl fell out of my hands*

*And made its abode in the heart of the oyster*

*With a lame and blind hope*

*Now I stretch out my hands*

*On the surface of the blue water*

*To get back the lost treasure*

*I lost everything through procrastination and vacillation*

*And now as a fading beggar I stand.*

## *Who Am I?*

*(From the Titles of Thomas Hardy)*

*I am a wandering speck*

*In the whirlwind of time,*

*A nothingness in the realm of Being*

*Striving to settle in the lands of love.*

*My name is 'the distinct'*

*Obscure in the sheath of burning desire*

*I live 'Under the Greenwood Tree'*

*'Far from the Madding Crowd'*

*Looking for 'An Imaginative Woman'*

*With 'A Pair of Blue Eyes'*

*In the middle of 'A Group of Noble Dames'*

*Looking to feature in 'A Tragedy of Two Ambitions'.*

*Though inspired by 'Moments of Vision'*

*My heart is intimidated by 'Life's Little Ironies'*

*Wandering to find 'Desperate Remedies'*

*Working 'For Conscience's Sake'*

*And trying to become 'The Unconquerable'*

*In the bluff of love.*

## *A Rendezvous with Eternal Beauty*

*In a rainy spring night*

*When the flowers are in full bloom*

*When the nightingale recites its poignant melodies*

*When a thunder reverberates in the lighted sky*

*And falls on the burning bushes of desire*

*When the dark nights of the soul give birth*

*To a moment of divine splendor*

*Once in a blue moon*

*The heaven descends to enlighten the darkened hearts*

*With the hymns of adoration on the lips*

*Riding the Arabian horses of imagination*

*The seekers open up their inward eyes*

*To water their dreary deserts of longing*

*And then the eternal beauty manifests itself*

*In the assembly of lovers.*



## *On the Other Side of the River*

*Your beauty on the other side of the river  
Enslaving with unknown chains  
Mixed with the muffling sounds of the river  
Your melodious voice dissolves honey in the ears.  
Having a look at your dazzling face  
Raises desire for the eternal light  
That fuels the Burning Bush of Sinai.  
Your killing gaze breaks the mirror of heart  
And leaving no room for heaven and hell  
Men have heard about the blessed damsels of paradise  
After seeing you, they will surely not desire them.  
Your vision illuminates the eye of imagination  
When the reason longed to free itself from your snares  
You outwitted everyone by your charms.  
Why wouldn't the lovers risk themselves for you?  
As in your eyes, the cosmos gets reflected.*

### *About the Author*

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen is a senior lecturer, research scholar, author, columnist, social activist and poet from the valley of Kashmir. His main interests are religion, spirituality and literature. His four books, *Kitab ul Zakat*, *Naqsh-e-Wafa*, *Rehnuma-e-Haj-o-Umrah* and *Kashmir Mein Islami Inqilab aur Shahi Hamadan (RA)* have been published so far acclaiming applause from academic circles.



'*Bodiless Shadows*' is his maiden collection of 22 poems in English revolving around his trysts with life. There is a persistent romantic and mystical strain in these 'raw ramblings'. He voices his first-hand personal experiences in a beautiful way and tries to relate them with the lives of every human individual. Thus, making us feel what it is like to be a perplexed human individual with common frailties, dark desires and lofty ambitions. He expresses sense of loss, nostalgic feelings and hard realities in a poignant manner and moves one and all. Another persistent theme that runs throughout this collection is the adoration and celebration of beauty. Since our lives are worth living not because of our worldly achievements but because of love and beauty and the poet has tried his level best to appreciate both of them. Almost every poem of this collection can be called human responses to love and beauty that we find around us. Since 'love' seems to be the main driving force behind these poetic expressions, this collection may aptly be called 'a labour of love'.

"Beauty says let there be no limits of time and space for my show

Love says let my contemplation and troubled ecstasies be eternal."